

be a gloomy day across America. No, I'm not a weather forecaster. It's going to be a gloomy day because of record extortionate and manipulated prices at the pump. Guess what? Crude oil prices are down over a year ago, but somehow gas is up 50 cents a gallon at the pump. How is that? The refineries are making four times, four times their normal margin on refining. Why is that? They said, oh, well, gosh, we couldn't have known people were going to start buying gas around Memorial Day. We had to close down some of the refineries to maintain them and to clean them. Does Exxon translate into Enron? Remember when Enron was doing the same thing in California? High demand, shut down the generating plants. Exxon, high demand, shut down the refineries.

It's time to stop the price gouging by Big Oil. Break them up. They aren't competitive, they're colluding.

LEADERSHIP IS NOT AS IT APPEARS, IT'S AS IT PERFORMS

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, you know, leadership is not as it appears; leadership is as it performs. And what the American people want to see is us performing and solving problems for them, addressing the issues that affect them, not window dressing. And window dressing is a lot of what we've done since the Democrats took control of the Chamber, brought forward their "Six for '06," and by the way, not one single bill has been signed into law.

A few other things. We've named a lot of post offices. Today we are going to have a supposed price-gouging bill. But you know, the harder thing would be to really address production, exploration, distribution, innovation in the oil and energy industry to make certain that we have a sustainable supply.

And by the way, it's been 106 days since the President sent us a request for emergency spending, and finally we are going to get a bill that can be signed into law.

Leadership is not as it appears, it is as it performs. Let's solve problems for the American people.

CHANGING THE WAY CONGRESS DOES BUSINESS

(Mr. ALTMIRE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, Democrats continue to demonstrate that they are changing the way Congress does business. We reach across the aisle to pass bipartisan legislation that puts the American people first. Just last week Republicans and Democrats came together to provide a much-deserved pay increase for our troops serving bravely overseas. We joined together to fight crime by adding 50,000 cops to the street, and we passed an affordable

housing bill that keeps the people of the gulf coast on the road to recovering after Hurricane Katrina.

We also accomplished something last week that 3 of the last 5 years Congress was unable to do: come to an agreement on a sensible budget with the Senate. It is a budget that prioritizes our Nation's veterans and achieves balance without raising a penny of taxes.

THE DEMOCRATS' FAILURE TO GOVERN

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, does it not seem ironic that the week in which we are scheduled to vote on a lobbying and ethics reform bill, that I might add is largely a carbon copy of a Republican bill from last year, we are faced with the behavior of a high-ranking Member of the Democrat leadership who made a threatening comment to another Member?

What are the American people supposed to make of the failure of the majority to keep their promises? Instead of delivering real reform, the Democrats march in lockstep behind one of their own, despite this clear violation of House ethics rules. Not only has the majority failed to deliver on their agenda, they have shown they will tolerate behavior in their ranks which is antithetical to their so-called reform efforts. In so doing, they have forfeited their credibility.

IN SUPPORT OF H.R. 1853

(Ms. WATSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to join me in support of H.R. 1853, the Jose Medina Veterans Affairs Police Training Act.

Mr. Speaker, more than 1.5 million U.S. troops have served in Iraq and Afghanistan, and according to an Army study, 20 percent are showing signs of post-traumatic stress syndrome. But surprisingly, most VA police officers do not receive any training on how to deal with patients suffering from mental illness. That is why we must prepare VA law enforcement officers to deal with the tens of thousands of veterans returning from Iraq that are expected to utilize VA medical centers for mental health services.

H.R. 1853, the Jose Medina Veterans Affairs Police Training Act, will ensure that our veterans are treated with dignity and respect when they seek treatment at VA facilities. Veterans' mental health needs should be one of this Congress' top priorities, and I urge your support.

IT'S STILL AN AMNESTY DEAL

(Mr. POE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, "amnesty" is a trigger word for most Americans. While we as a people disagree on many issues, most Americans oppose the thought of legalization of illegal conduct; in other words, amnesty.

So the special-interest groups and the profiteers from plantation labor have been careful not to call the new, inclusive immigration proposal amnesty. But that's exactly what it is. It legalizes the illegals that are in America, some 12- to 20 million. All they need to do is a few things, including pay a fee, or as I see it, a government kickback, and they get to stay in America. But supporters of this proposal still refuse to accept the obvious: It's amnesty, or pardon for illegal conduct.

If somebody trespasses on your land, when they are caught they usually have to pay a fine, but they also must get off your property. If they pay the fine and are allowed to continue to stay on your property, it is amnesty. This is similar to what the special-interest groups are trying to repackage and sell to the American public and even illegal immigrants. But it seems to me these groups are selling out America. We shall see what the American public think.

And that's just the way it is.

BUSH THREATENS VETO OF STRONG BIPARTISAN DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION BILL

(Mr. PERLMUTTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, President Bush says he supports our troops, but his actions last week refute those claims, and his actions speak louder than his words.

Last Thursday, this House voted overwhelmingly, by 397-27, to support a defense authorization bill that gives our troops a much-deserved 3.5 percent raise, a lot less than the contractors from Halliburton are getting, contractors that the President has farmed out much of the war in Iraq to, but still a 3.5 percent raise.

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Incredibly, the President has threatened to veto the bill. Two of the reasons he gave for his opposition are the pay raise and benefits to survivors. By threatening to veto this bill, how exactly is our President supporting our troops? Well, he is not.

Over the last 5 years, the President has asked much of our military. Extended deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan have strained our Active military and National Guard and their families. This Congress overwhelmingly said we should reward our troops. If the President really wants to support our troops, he will sign the bill.

STOPPING TERRORISM OVERSEAS

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, a homicide bomber in Gardez, Afghanistan, mass-murdered 14 civilians and injured 36 others, including five members of the 218th brigade of the South Carolina National Guard. This affects me personally, as I was a member of the 218th for over 20 years. In July 2000, we trained together in the Mojave Desert at Fort Irwin to face this very evil, and now our courageous troops are stopping terrorists overseas.

Chuck Crumbo of The State newspaper reported the suicide bomber followed the Guard convoy and detonated himself in the midst of innocent women and children on a crowded street. This act of cowardice confirms why we must stop the terrorists overseas or they will return to America. In the past 96 hours, there was an attack in Baghdad, terrorists acted in Lebanon, and a shopping mall was blown up in Turkey.

I know my comrades, ably led by General Bob Livingston, are ready to face al Qaeda's boast of Afghanistan and Iraq as the central front in the global war on terrorism. This is how we can best protect American families. I have never been prouder of the Guard's service.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September 11.

HONORING AND REWARDING OUR TROOPS FOR THEIR VALOR AND SACRIFICE

(Mr. BISHOP of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Speaker, last week the White House recommended a veto of the defense authorization bill and said Congress wants to pay our troops too much for defending America. It is unconscionable to suggest our troops aren't worth a half percent more in pay, while many of their families scrape by on food stamps or pay for their own body armor.

Paying our troops what they deserve should go hand in hand with relieving them of taxes they don't deserve. That is why the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. DAVIS) and I introduced a bill last week to eliminate Federal taxation of student loan reimbursements to military personnel and Federal civilian employees.

Our bill, H.R. 2363, eliminates this tax and creates an incentive to help our Armed Forces compete with private sector recruitment and retention by lowering the soaring debt faced by college graduates.

Mr. Speaker, as we salute our troops and honor our fallen this Memorial Day, let's give them the pay raise they deserve.

EMPHASIZING PREVENTIVE CARE IN MEDICARE PROGRAM

(Mrs. CAPITO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the importance of preventive care in the Medicare program.

As we all know, the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003 made many important and much-needed changes to the Medicare program. The creation of the Medicare prescription drug benefit was a critically important modernization of the program and has been especially successful in my home State of West Virginia, with 287,000 beneficiaries.

But the prescription drug benefit is just one component of the overall changes in Medicare. If we can encourage more seniors to actually use the preventive benefits, we can help them prevent more costly procedures and longer stays in the hospital.

That is why the "Welcome to Medicare" screening is so vitally important. Many of the elements that seniors face today can be effectively managed with prescription medicine and regular visits to their physicians. However, disease management is only effective if we catch the disease early.

I would like to encourage my colleagues to educate their constituents about these important modernizations to the Medicare program so we can all better serve our senior citizens.

DEMOCRATS WORKING TO ESTABLISH A NEW, SMART AND FAIR ENERGY POLICY

(Mr. SARBANES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. Speaker, as Americans across the country begin planning their summer vacations, one major constraint they will have to face is the severely high price of gas. We are once again seeing record gas prices this Memorial Day, making the prospect of travel daunting for many families. Why is this trend continuing? For 6 years, President Bush and the Republican Congress failed to enact a comprehensive energy strategy to provide relief from these skyrocketing costs.

This Democratic Congress is ready to act and move our Nation in a new direction on energy. Already we have voted to roll back billions of dollars in subsidies to Big Oil and instead reinvest those funds in renewable energy. And now this week we will take up the issue of price gouging by the oil industry. We have seen the first quarter reports. The oil companies are making record profits, and it is time they were held accountable.

Mr. Speaker, this Democratic Congress will work hard to pass legislation that can establish a new, smart, and fair energy policy for the American people.

HONORING VERA WERNER ON HER 105TH BIRTHDAY

(Mrs. BACHMANN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. BACHMANN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a great American and a woman from my district, Mrs. Vera Werner, on the occasion of her 105th birthday. It is a goal to which we all aspire but very few of us ever achieve.

Vera was born in 1902 in Melrose, Minnesota, on May 31, a great day. She is an unassuming Minnesotan, Mr. Speaker. She married, and 2 years later she moved to the big city of St. Cloud, Minnesota. During her time there, she touched many people's lives. Like so many Americans, she had numerous friends. She was on a bowling league for 40 years and she worked in the local department store.

But, Mr. Speaker, Vera Werner accomplished the most important work of any American: She was a mother to four children, she was a grandmother to 21, a great-grandmother to more than 40, and she has so many great-great-grandchildren that people can't keep count. There is no more important function as an American, Mr. Speaker, than to be a good mother or a good father.

Today, Vera, our Nation salutes you, and we wish you happy 105th birthday.

HOW EXACTLY IS PRESIDENT SUPPORTING OUR TROOPS WHEN HE THREATENS A VETO OF DOD PAY INCREASE?

(Mr. COSTA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, this House on a bipartisan basis overwhelmingly supported our troops last week by giving them a 3.5 percent pay raise over the next year. What is our President's response? A threatened veto. In a statement opposing the higher pay raise, the administration noted that the President's proposal, in their opinion, provided a good quality of life for servicemembers and families.

Mr. President, apparently you have not read the 2004 Kaiser Family Foundation report that indicates that over one in five military families rely on food stamps or WIC for Federal aid. This is simply unacceptable.

The best way we can send a message to our troops that we support the grueling work that they do on a daily basis is by showing it, by putting more money in their pockets so they can better provide for their families.

The bottom line is that men and women fighting in Iraq or Afghanistan should not have to supplement their income through living on food stamps or WIC. We encourage the President to reconsider the veto threat and to support the entire pay raise.

FINDING MIDDLE GROUND ON IMMIGRATION REFORM

(Mr. PENCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, last year, the President of the United States